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OH, THE STORIES I COULD TELL: HEMI-SYNC IN FAMILY THERAPY



by Debra D. Davis, MEd, LPC, LMFT

Debra Davis, MEd, became a Professional Member in March 1995. She has maintained a private practice in Fort Worth, Texas, for eighteen years as a licensed professional counselor and licensed marriage and family therapist. Debra consults with entrepreneurs, their staff, and their families to manage change in the professional milieu by delving into the impact of family and individual dynamics on business success or failure. Her primary counseling contract for the past eight years has been with the Parenting Center. The clientele is a mixture of referrals from the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services/Child Protective Services and includes court-ordered counseling for custody and divorce disputes. Community parents in need of encouragement and alternative parenting tools also seek Debra's assistance.

I attended the *GATEWAY* in 1988 and *GUIDELINES* in 1989. Bob Monroe asked me to "please" submit in writing the stories he heard me telling at breakfast on one of the mornings he joined us. I never got around to it. The stories have multiplied manifold since then. In honor of Bob's transition, I'm now sharing some of these stories. The focus will be mainly on the children with whom I've used Hemi-Sync since 1988. When possible, I'll explain how the decision is made to use Hemi-Sync with a particular client and why particular tapes are chosen.

I had just returned from the *GATEWAY* in 1988. New to Hemi-Sync, I was cautious about trying it out with clients even though I used it daily. This mother was in her thirties with two boys aged seven and nine. She was a psychic and gave readings at a time when "that kind of stuff" was considered a hoax at best and downright crazy at worst, certainly in Fort Worth, Texas. She was very depressed and not finding life much worth living. I found her vocation credible, and the rapport between us grew. Plus, I could share my experiences at The Monroe Institute.

Her older son was on Ritalin® and had excruciating migraine headaches requiring occasional craniosacral adjustments to relieve the pressure. As we began one counseling session he was experiencing one of his headaches. His eyes were so dilated only the pupils were visible. Since I listened to *Concentration* on a regular basis to help me focus, I thought, "Well, surely it can't hurt, and it may even help." It was hard for him even to wear the headphones because of the pain. I held my breath and tried to remain casual. We kept talking about the headaches and his

medication. He had lost a lot of weight and looked unhealthy. In less than five minutes, he stopped in mid-sentence, looked at me in a combination of puzzlement, amazement, and relief, and said, "The headache is gone!" My reply was something profound like, "Oh, really? Good." And we continued with the session. He took *Concentration* and *Catnapper* home. His mother began to use both tapes herself and listened to *Catnapper* with the boys to unwind in the evenings before homework, dinner, and family time. They were out of crisis and on a fairly even keel after a few weeks. She called occasionally over the next year and came for a session when things got rocky.

We then lost touch with one another until recently. They were still using the original *Concentration* and *Catnapper* from seven years before. I offered them a wealth of new Hemi-Sync choices and replaced the original *Concentration* and *Catnapper*. The oldest son, now sixteen years old, handsome, and healthy, was having difficulty in school. He got A's and B's in regular classwork but got 40s and 50s on tests, trashing his average. It was already time for finals when I entered the picture again and gave him *Remembrance*. He and a friend used the tape to study for their finals in all subjects. His mother reported that he made no test score below an 84 on any final and was ecstatic. His friend's results were similar. Mom uses *Concentration* regularly in her psychic readings, which have taken a new direction. She has started to channel and uses the tape to contact her guides faster when she is impatient.

A seven-year-old boy's mother brought him for counseling. He had been frequently wondering aloud what it would be like to die and was making comments about not being liked by other children or loved by his parents. His mother was remarried, with a new son, making this youngster the middle child. He was a somber, sober little guy and very intelligent, with a dry wit. After a psychiatric evaluation, he was given medication that relieved the obvious depression. However, he never acted spontaneous or happy in eight months of treatment.

We'd play certain games each session. During one session I asked if he'd like to test some special music tapes and give me his opinion. I started with *Remembrance*. The response was almost immediate; within two minutes he asked if he could listen to it while we played our games. I agreed, saying I wanted him to try out some of the other tapes, too. He didn't want to change from *Remembrance*. I was puzzled and waited to see what was up. He chose the first game, and we began to play. His energy level began to rise—subtly at first, then not so subtly. He looked at me, cracked jokes about the game, and began to tease me! I didn't mention changing tapes again since the results were so spectacular with *Remembrance*. By the end of the session his energy and affect were joyful, and he said, "I gotta have me one of these [tapes]!" I heartily concurred. It took his mother three weeks to get the tape, and two more to get the tape player. However, by the next visit, he was off all antidepressant medication and only saw the psychiatrist at three-month intervals for follow-up, rather than monthly.

On another occasion, I received a desperate call from a grandmother who is rearing her two grandsons and a granddaughter. The four-year-old grandson was out of control at day care and she could not leave work. She had taken so much time off for the children that her job was in jeopardy. The boy was running around, refusing to be redirected, and disrupting the whole group. I grabbed my cassette player and Hemi-Sync tapes and headed over. When I arrived, the child was isolated on a rug in the large room and lying on his stomach with his head in his arms. He was surprised to see me, since I was clearly out of place

there. Sitting on the rug with him, I announced without fanfare that I had some more music for him to listen to and asked him to please tell me what he liked. He wouldn't take his head out of his arms, so I said I was going to put his favorite tape (*Remembrance*) in the tape player, and then I put the headphones on him. Shortly, he started to tap his feet and hands to the music. His head came up, but his eyes remained averted. Then he turned and began discussing the other tapes, initiating an exercise of changing tapes and playing with the cassette player. It was a mistake to have so many choices. However, the pattern was broken and the rest of his day went much better.

A fourteen-year-old girl was referred for counseling by her caseworker at Child Protective Services. She and both her siblings had histories of severe abuse. In her foster home, she was having problems complying with rules. This child was always in motion of some kind during sessions and could not focus on any topic of conversation for more than a couple of minutes. We had only moderate success playing board games and card games as we talked. At the second session we began some inner work—a process using relaxation and guided imagery. She listened to the original *Concentration* tape (without verbal guidance) and became still after about ten minutes, except for foot tapping and occasional peeks to check on me. Her foster parent later told me that she was upset at not being given a tape like that to take with her. Evidently she had experienced more relaxation than was apparent. For the third session we introduced *Remembrance* and several of the *METAMUSIC ARTIST* tapes. She liked *Remembrance* best, then *Winds over the World*, *Cloudscapes*, and *Surf*. Subsequently we used the *Remembrance* tape for inner work since she stayed focused so easily with it. So far, over forty children have tried *METAMUSIC* and *METAMUSIC ARTIST* tapes, and, without an exception, each child has picked *Remembrance* as the number one favorite.

A father and his two children had been seeing me intermittently for about three years. He had recently remarried. As this new family blended, it was imperative to air differences and problem-solve in our sessions. In the midst of all this change (remarriage, moving, etc.), his company decided to eliminate a position and divide it between him and another employee. I recommended that the family try some of The Monroe Institute tapes. This man began playing *Remembrance* in the car on the way to work and also at work on a small boombox. People would drift into his office and ask, "What's that playing?" His big joke was to say, "Gee, I don't know. We'll have to look and find it." He observed that he could handle the new information and figure out how to do the new job, in addition to his regular work, with much less tension and irritability than usual. He noticed a definite increase in his energy and ability to stay focused. By the next session, his spouse was demanding equal time with *Remembrance*. They also like *Midnight* and plan to try *Deep Ten Relaxation* and *Winds over the World*. Both credit the tapes for calmer and more productive problem solving at home as well. This man only listens to country/western music, and I wasn't sure he'd go for any of this.

A three-year-old boy I've seen off and on in play therapy for several months was finally kicked out of day care on Thursday for violent behavior (typical after a weekend visit with Dad, who's a batterer). On Monday in our regular session I asked him if he would like to hear some special music and tell me what he liked best. He agreed. We got the headphones adjusted and started *Remembrance*. He was motionless, listening. Suddenly his eyes widened, he smiled this incredible smile, turned to his mother and said, "Listen, Mommy!" He gave the headset to his mother

who put it on and said, "Yes, that's very nice." Still enthusiastic and animated, he continued in a matter-of-fact tone, "It's the angels, Mommy."



OPENING THE WAY: A NEW HEMI-SYNC SERIES TO SUPPORT PREGNANCY AND BIRTH



by Janet L. M. Henneke, Midwife

Janet L. M. Henneke is a midwife with a home birth practice in the Texas Hill Country near Hunt, Texas. She is also a childbirth reform activist who is promoting natural alternatives to medicated birth and educating women about personal empowerment through active participation in the birth process. Her first experience with Hemi-Sync was through the Discovery album from the GATEWAY EXPERIENCE. She credits the use of those tapes at home with expanding her own awareness and creativity. The ideas for a pregnancy and birth series came to her at the piano.

Introduction

For some time I have observed that women who are experiencing totally unmedicated natural birth seem to attain altered states of consciousness. Although they remain able to respond to simple questions and move about physically, they become more and more "detached" from waking consciousness as their labors progress. These mothers do not seem to experience their labors as painful. Often they appear to be almost "asleep," though assuredly they are working very hard on an internal level. Signs of this shift of consciousness are welcomed by midwives, who traditionally call it "going to the moon," because it usually means that the labor is progressing normally and the baby will soon arrive. (However, most midwives do not think of this state as an "altered state of consciousness," just as most people do not think of the sleep state in that way.)

Conversely, I have observed that women whose labors go on hour after hour without progress, are usually women who for some reason have great difficulty "letting go." They frequently have a strong need to remain in control, which manifests as excessive tension, pain, and fear; they fight their labors. These mothers often have very long, difficult births. While it is possible for the natural labor process to wear them down to the point of "letting go," what generally happens is that they receive epidural anesthesia and, quite often, a cesarean section at the hospital. In

labors like this, the medical interventions are quite a humane alternative, which I do not oppose.

However, as my personal knowledge of Hemi-Sync grew over the past three years, I had the idea that it could be used to help women in labor shift to another level of consciousness that would facilitate the birth process. Just as the *GOING HOME* series helps to make transition out of the physical body easier by familiarizing people with altered states of consciousness, I hypothesized that Hemi-Sync might assist the birthing mother by helping her learn to easily relinquish physical waking consciousness.

Testing Hemi-Sync in Labor

I contacted The Monroe Institute with my idea. Together we created a tape with the sound of ocean waves (a familiar theme on the Hemi-Sync tapes and also familiar to many childbirth educators as an analogy to describe labor contractions), simple musical themes, and basic delta wave frequencies. In cooperation with Dr. Justine Owens, a researcher from the University of Virginia who has been consulting with The Monroe Institute, we designed a pilot project to test the tape during actual labors at the Birth and Women's Center, a freestanding birth center in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Owens also located a psychological instrument to evaluate levels of anxiety during labor. The instrument was developed by Dr. Regina Lederman, who granted us permission to use it.

Expectant mothers were asked to participate in a study to evaluate the effects of music on relaxation during labor. Of the seventeen women who were due to birth in January 1995, four birthed before I arrived in Dallas, four birthed after my departure on January 30, and one chose not to participate. One wanted to participate but birthed while I was not present to play the tapes and complete the surveys. This means that the tape was actually tested at only eight births, which is a very small sample. Thus, the results cannot be evaluated statistically with any reliability. However, many observations can be made.

Of course, what we would have liked to observe during this pilot project would have been a significant reduction in hours of labor or incidence of problems requiring transfer of care to a hospital or another such objective indicator. We did not get anything so clear-cut. In fact, the number of clients transferred to a hospital from the birth center during the month of January was unusually high. The consensus opinion attributed this to the preponderance of first-time mothers with prolonged rupture of membranes. Prolonged rupture of membranes necessitates transfer of care within twelve to twenty-four hours due to the risk of infection.

What we did get was the overwhelmingly favorable endorsement of the tapes by the birthing families and caregivers. It was quite clear that every mother who listened to the tapes—and often fathers and friends as well—entered into altered consciousness quickly and easily. For want of a better term, I will refer to this state as the "birth zone." In one very dramatic case, a mother arrived at the Birth Center screaming in pain with every contraction. After five minutes of Hemi-Sync she noted that the contractions were no longer unmanageable and settled into a comfortable side-lying position. She only roused to go to the bathroom. Within four hours she dilated to eight centimeters—very rapid progress for a first-timer.

In an equally dramatic case, a mother had never before experienced unmedicated birth and found Hemi-Sync to be so effective for pain that she made it through transition—the last three centimeters of dilation that most women find to be most

difficult—without the expected sedative. She called for the tape again to relieve postpartum pain. Indications that the tape helped mothers who had had several babies but were experiencing ineffective pre-labor patterns were inconclusive but intriguing. They seemed to establish effective patterns resulting in very rapid deliveries from the point of time when Hemi-Sync was introduced.

Another finding was speculative, but we believe it is important for designing the final tapes for the pregnancy and childbirth series. Deep delta frequencies may not be ideal for the second or "active" stage of labor when the mother is pushing. In at least one labor the contractions seemed to be rather weak and infrequent during second stage. In the births that were very fast, the tape had been turned off before pushing began. The technical staff at The Monroe Institute believe that a slightly different combination of frequencies will encourage a more active-alert state of consciousness during second stage. This is being incorporated into a separate tape with more theta wave frequencies to be played after full dilation has been reached. I am currently researching the "ecstatic trance" state, including specific body postures and rhythms that seem to help induce it. I believe that the birthing woman is completely grounded in the physical body and in the "birth zone" simultaneously—a sort of "in-the-body/out-of-body" state.

The results of using Hemi-Sync during labor were impressive. The tapes definitely seemed to help mothers without previous training or exposure to Hemi-Sync to get into the "birth zone." It is possible that with prior training in the use of Hemi-Sync, as well as an understanding of how an altered state of consciousness may relate to a successful natural birth, even complicated cases may yield to the beneficial effects of the tapes.

The Pregnancy and Childbirth Series

My understanding of the power of the Monroe approach has grown beyond that of a way to assist a mother into the "birth zone." Working with the professional staff and incorporating my knowledge of childbirth into actual scripts for the series, I realized that this is really a tool for personal transformation.

A great deal of fear is attached to childbirth in our society. After all, it has become associated with major surgery! The cesarean section rate in the United States is 25 percent and as high as 50 percent at some hospitals. Birth has become technologized and dehumanized. It is tragic that one of the potentially most sublime and powerful events of a woman's life has become so threatening. As fear feeds on itself, a young woman birthing for the first time is more likely to require major interventions in what should be a natural and normal event.

The tapes can reintroduce a sense of the positive nature of pregnancy and birth that seems to have been lost. The expectant mother will have a whole set of "tools" to take into her labor. She will then approach the impending birth more confidently.

Emotional Clearing: An entire tape is devoted to emotional clearing. Unresolved personal issues—abuse, previous abortions, doubts about parenting, etc.—can interfere with the birth process.

Physical and Emotional Balancing: The tapes contain positive suggestions about "balancing and equalizing" the physical body and the emotions. Such suggestions, used successfully in the *POSITIVE IMMUNITY* series, are also resources for the pregnant, birthing, and postpartum woman. This focus returns us to ancient wisdom about how the expectant mother's happiness and serenity affect the baby.

Pain Relief: The Institute's *SURGICAL SUPPORT* series has already demonstrated dramatic applications for the relief of pain (HEMI-SYNC JOURNAL, Vol. IX, No. 3, Summer 1991). The

mother can use this application to relieve the discomforts of pregnancy and the pain of labor, perhaps reducing or eliminating the need for obstetrical drugs. After all, during unmedicated labor the body releases large quantities of endorphins, the body's natural pain relieving substances. If the mother can cooperate with this natural mechanism, maybe anesthesia and analgesia, with their possible harmful effects on the immature nervous system of the baby, can be avoided.

Preparing the Father and Other Support Team Members: There will also be a tape for the father or other caregiver. Experiencing the "birth zone" for himself could help the father to better understand the birth process. This tape will also help a father understand the intimacy of birth and how vulnerable and suggestible a woman in the "birth zone" becomes. It will enable him to provide appropriate support to his partner.

Relating to the Unborn Baby: Perhaps the most startling application of Hemi-Sync that has developed in relation to this series is the tape titled *Contacting the Baby's Soul*. Just as the *GOING HOME* series includes a tape for contacting the soul of a person who has left physical incarnation, the pregnancy and childbirth series will include a tape to help parents contact the soul of their baby before birth. This is a logical extension of the concept that we are "more than our physical bodies." To date, this is an entirely untested portion of the series. We are open to the results of this new journey of human consciousness, in the true exploratory spirit bequeathed to us by Robert Monroe.



[OPENING THE WAY will be available in January, 1996.]

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